

Proclamation 7727—National Hospice Month, 2003

October 30, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Hospice care plays an important role in American medicine by easing a patient's suffering while reaffirming individual dignity in a familiar, comfortable environment. Across our Nation, hospice care providers are assisting in hospitals, nursing homes, and private residences, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual support to patients who often have a short life expectancy.

Hospice teams consist of physicians, nurses, social workers, counselors, and volunteers who are experts in end-of-life issues. They offer pain management, therapy, nutrition, and other supportive care in the home or other comfortable surroundings, making it easier for patients, family members, and friends to spend time together in their loved one's final days. Hospice experts also offer grief counseling to friends and family members after their loss.

Every stage of human life deserves to be treated with respect and care. I commend all those who work and volunteer as hospice care providers. Their contributions make our Nation a better place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2003 as National Hospice Month. I encourage Americans to increase their awareness of hospice service and to observe this month with appropriate activities and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on November 4.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in San Antonio, Texas

October 30, 2003

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. It is really good to be home, and it's good to be with so many friends. It seems like old home week here. [Laughter] I want to thank you all very much for your friendship and your strong support. I want to thank you for your prayers. I want to thank you for being my friend before I became the President—[laughter]—and my friend after I become the President—[laughter]—in 2009. No, no, we—[applause].

This is a fantastic event tonight. It not only lifts my spirits to be with a lot of people with whom I've served in the past and a lot of friends, but we're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great national victory in 2004. I'm loosening up—[laughter]—and I'm getting ready. But politics will come in its own time, because I've got a job to do.

Audience member. And you're doing a great one.

The President. Well, thank you very much. [Laughter] I'm focused on the people's business. I'm doing what's right for this country. I will continue to work to make sure this country is strong and secure, prosperous, and free.

I have a regret, and that is that the First Lady is not with me tonight. She's in Tyler. We're going to meet up in Crawford. She is a fabulous wife, a fabulous mother, and a great First Lady for America.

I want to thank the Loefflers for their friendship and their hard work. It's a fantastically successful event. As I look around, I see folks who hold high office. The chief justice of the supreme court is here, Tom Phillips; the attorney general is here, Greg Abbott; the secretary of agriculture is here, Susan Combs; Albert Hawkins, the commissioner of health and human services; Diane Rath, the workforce commissioner. I see Wentworth is here, the State senator; State Representative Jones and Edmund Kuempel and Ken Mercer. Thank you all for coming. It's great to see you again. I miss my buddies in the statehouse. I've got such fond memories of working with people here in the great State of Texas. It was a fantastic experience.

I also want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds from Cincinnati, Ohio, who is the national finance chairman for Bush-Cheney. He's doing a great job of——

Audience member. Go Mercer!

The President. ——laying the groundwork. Mercer brought his cousin. [Laughter] Most of all, I want to thank you all. Thanks a lot for coming.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems instead of passing them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. This administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance. Those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and today they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. So we increased the defense budgets to meet the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. And then our country was attacked. And then we had some scandals in corporate America, and war. All those affected the people's confidence, but I acted. We passed tough new laws in Washington, DC, to hold the corporate criminals to account.

And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. So we're returning more money to the people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and

capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to hire new people. With all these actions, this administration has laid the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so that every single one of our citizens can realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I acted. I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms at the Federal level in a generation. In return for Federal money, we expect public schools to teach children how to read and write and add and subtract, because we believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in every single classroom so that not one single child in America is left behind.

We reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Texas farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs. We passed much needed budget agreements to bring spending discipline to Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, kept its word, and made progress for the American people.

The Congress gets credit for these achievements. I've got a great relationship with Speaker Denny Hastert and Majority Leader Bill Frist. We're working hard to focus on results and to get rid of the needless politics that dominates the Nation's Capital. We're doing the work for the people. And those are the kind of people I've asked to join this administration. I put together a fantastic, diverse group of people to serve the American people. We've had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a second opinion. [Laughter]

In 2½ years, we have done a lot. We have come far, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the

realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every single citizen, every citizen, has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the great promise of our land.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home. We are freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

The war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest. We will not tire. We will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

We are confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam Hussein holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw Iraq into chaos by attacking coalition forces and international aid workers and innocent Iraqis. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat in the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying to shake the will of America and the civilized world, and this country will not be intimidated.

We are aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq, defeating them there so we will not have to face them in our own country. We're calling other nations to help Iraq to build a free country, which will make the world more secure. We're standing with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. These aren't easy tasks, but they're essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror, free nations do not attack their neighbors, free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person, and I believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world, and

when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. This great, strong Nation is leading the world. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is doing incredibly important work of human rescue.

We've got challenges here at home as well, and our actions will prove that we're equal to the challenges. We had some good news today on the economy. But let me tell you this, so long as anybody who wants to work can't find a job, means that I must continue to create the conditions for economic vitality and growth, to make sure the great entrepreneurial spirit of America is alive and well in every corner of this country.

We have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Congress has taken historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate passed reforms to increase the choices for seniors and provide coverage for prescription drugs. The next step is for both Houses to reconcile their differences and get a bill to my desk soon. We owe it to America's seniors, and we owe a modern Medicare system to those of us who are going to be America's seniors.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. I appreciate the reforms that Governor Perry and the legislature did here in Texas. We recognize that people who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court, yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. We proposed good law to the House and Senate. The House of Representatives passed a good bill. The bill is stuck in the United States Senate. I'm proud to report, our two United States Senators, the Senators from Texas, are on the right side of the issue. Those who have held up this important piece of legislation in the

United States Senate must recognize that not one single person has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members are trying to keep my nominees, people like Priscilla Owen, off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Two years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, a plan that will promote energy efficiency and conservation, that will develop new technologies, but will encourage exploration in an environmentally friendly way in our own country. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, the Congress must act so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, which means we will apply the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on the Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their community and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children, that are caring for the homeless, that are offering hope to the addicted. People from all faiths—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu—have heard a universal call. We must welcome that call. In order to heal the broken heart, this country must not fear faith. We must welcome faith in the essential delivery of need for people who hurt.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. This Nation has a minority homeownership gap. I presented a plan to the United States Congress to close that gap. America must act. The Congress must act. We want more people to own and manage their own health care accounts. We want more people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning their own small business. We understand in this administration that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself. The culture of service and responsibility is strong here in America. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been great. Faith-based charities and charitable programs are strong and vibrant. And that's important, really important, to make sure the future of this country is alive and well for every citizen.

Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something

greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation.

We are a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity across our land. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it and know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:48 p.m. at the Marriott Rivercenter. In his remarks, he referred to Tom and Nancy Loeffler, event cohosts; Thomas R. Phillips, chief justice, Texas Supreme Court; Greg Abbott, Texas attorney general; Susan Combs, Texas agriculture commissioner; Albert Hawkins, Texas health and human services commissioner; Diane D. Rath, chair and commissioner, Texas Workforce Commission; State Senator Jeff Wentworth and State Representatives Elizabeth Ames Jones, Edmund Kuempel, and Ken Mercer of Texas; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; and Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 25

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

October 26

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Arnold I. Havens to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by wildfires on October 21 and continuing.

October 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Ion Iliescu of Romania.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with economic advisers.

The White House announced that the President will host NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson for a meeting and working luncheon on November 12.

October 29

In the morning, the President had a breakfast meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to discuss legislative priorities. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then met with the National Security Council and later with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Later in the morning, the President participated in a roundtable discussion on Medicare with Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson, AARP President James G. Parkel, and a group of senior citizens.

In the afternoon, on the South Steps, the President participated in a photo opportunity with White House interns. Later, he traveled to Dallas, TX.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.